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Beheading law is inane

Kokomo Tribune Editorial Board

There are hardly more gruesome ways to die than to be decapitated. The very idea of it is a primal violation. This is why people who want to instill fear use it. It's a caps lock followed by a series of exclamation points.

But is it much of a problem here in Indiana?

State Sen. Brent Steele, R-Bedford, chairman of the Senate committee on Judiciary, seems to think so. He has sponsored a bill that would allow the death penalty to be used in such cases.

"Indiana law already provides life without parole or the death penalty for anyone convicted of torturing or mutilation before a killing," read a story by The Associated Press we published Jan. 14. "It also provides a possible death sentence for dismembering a homicide victim. The bill would extend the definition of mutilation to include decapitation since the current statute is unclear."

The state Senate criminal law committee unanimously passed it Jan. 13.

Later last month, it cleared another hurdle.

“Senators voted 45-4 [on Jan. 22] in favor of the proposal,” reported the AP Jan. 23. “The proposal now goes to the Indiana House for consideration.”

Perhaps we here in Indiana are more sensitive than most because of the beheading of native Hoosier Peter Kassig, who was shown in a video to have been killed by ISIS Nov. 16, 2014. It is true ISIS has captured the attention of the world with such brutality.

However, it’s ludicrous to think these extremists behave in such a manner because the penalties aren’t strict enough.

This is an easy issue for legislators to get behind because there’s very little risk associated with being tough on beheading. It smacks of a pre-made political ad.